

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-36 (Cancelled)

Claims 37-47 (Cancelled)

48. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent, which comprises a polymer obtained by a process including the steps of polymerizing and then cross linking a monomer including acrylic acid and/or a salt thereof,

with the water-absorbing agent being characterized by exhibiting a free swelling capacity of not less than 23 g/g (GV), an absorption capacity of not less than 20 g/g under a load of 4.9 kPa (AAP), and a gel deformation of not more than 12.5 cm under a load (16 hrPT).

49. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 48, which exhibits a deterioration of ball burst strength of not more than 40% (DBBS).

50. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 48, which exhibits a gel deformation deterioration of not more than 3.5 cm under a load with the passage of time (Δ PT).

Claims 51-52 (Cancelled)

53. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 48, which further comprises an inorganic powder.

54. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent, which comprises a polymer obtained by a process including the steps of polymerizing and then crosslinking a monomer including acrylic acid and/or a salt thereof,

with the water-absorbing agent being characterized by exhibiting a free swelling capacity of not less than 23 g/g (GV), an absorption capacity of not less than 20 g/g under a load of 4.9 kPa (AAP), and a 16 hours' ball burst strength of not less than 80 gf (16 hrBBS).

55. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 54, which exhibits a deterioration of ball burst strength of not more than 40% (DBBS).

56. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 54, which exhibits a gel deformation deterioration of not more than 3.5 cm under a load with the passage of time (Δ PT).

Claims 57-58 (Cancelled)

59. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 54, which further comprises an inorganic powder.

60. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent, which comprises a polymer obtained by a process including the steps of polymerizing and then crosslinking a monomer including acrylic acid and/or a salt thereof,

with the water-absorbing agent being characterized by exhibiting a free swelling capacity of not less than 23 g/g (GV), a gel deformation of not more than 12.5 cm under a

short-time load (0.5 hrPT), and a gel deformation deterioration of not more than 3.5 cm under a load with the passage of time (Δ PT).

61. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 60, which exhibits an absorption capacity of not less than 20 g/g under a load of 4.9 kPa (AAP).

62. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 60, which exhibits a gel deformation of not more than 12.5 cm under a load (16 hrPT).

63. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 60, which exhibits a 16 hours' ball burst strength of not less than 80 gf (16 hrBBS).

Claims 64-65 (Cancelled)

66. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 60, which further comprises an inorganic powder.

67. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent, which comprises a polymer obtained by a process including the steps of polymerizing and then crosslinking a monomer including acrylic acid and/or a salt thereof,

with the water-absorbing agent being characterized by exhibiting a free swelling capacity of not less than 23 g/g (GV), a ball burst strength of not less than 80 gf (BBS), and a deterioration of ball burst strength of not more than 40% (DBBS).

68. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 67, which exhibits an absorption capacity of not less than 20 g/g under a load of 4.9 kPa (AAP).

69. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 67, which exhibits a gel deformation of not more than 12.5 cm under a load (16 hrPT).

70. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 67, which exhibits a 16 hours' ball burst strength of not less than 80 gf (16 hrBBS).

Claims 71-72 (Cancelled)

73. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 67, which further comprises an inorganic powder.

Claims 74-77 (Cancelled)

78. (Previously presented) A water-absorbent structure, which comprises the water-absorbing agent as recited in claim 48.

79. (Previously presented) A water-absorbent structure, which comprises the water-absorbing agent as recited in claim 54.

80. (Previously presented) A water-absorbent structure, which comprises the water-absorbing agent as recited in claim 60.

81. (Previously presented) A water-absorbent structure, which comprises the water-absorbing agent as recited in claim 67.

Claims 82-85 (Cancelled)

86. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 48, wherein said water-absorbing agent exhibits a saline flow conductivity of not less than $50 (10^{-7} \times \text{cm}^3 \times \text{s} \times \text{g}^{-1})$ (SFC).

87. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 54, wherein said water-absorbing agent exhibits a saline flow conductivity of not less than $50 (10^{-7} \times \text{cm}^3 \times \text{s} \times \text{g}^{-1})$ (SFC).

88. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 60, wherein said water-absorbing agent exhibits a saline flow conductivity of not less than $50 (10^{-7} \times \text{cm}^3 \times \text{s} \times \text{g}^{-1})$ (SFC).

89. (Previously presented) A water-absorbing agent according to claim 67, wherein said water-absorbing agent exhibits a saline flow conductivity of not less than $50 (10^{-7} \times \text{cm}^3 \times \text{s} \times \text{g}^{-1})$ (SFC).